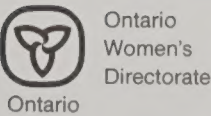


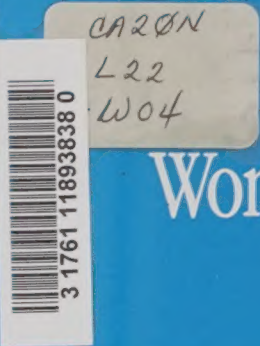
FOOTNOTES

- 1. Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Division, unpublished data.
- 2. Ibid.
- 3. Ibid.
- 4. Statistics Canada, Household and Family Projections. Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1976-2001, Catalogue 91-522 (occasional), December 1981, Table 3, p.72.
- 5. Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Division, unpublished data.
- 6. Household and Family Projections, Table 3, p.72.
- 7. C.D. Howe Research Institute, Policy Review and Outlook, 1979 – Anticipating the Unexpected, (Montreal: C.D. Howe Research Institute, 1979), p.147; Canada, Department of Finance, Participation Rate and Labour Force Growth in Canada by Dan Ciuriak and Harvey Sims (Ottawa: Department of Finance, 1980), p.56.
- 8. Canada, Department of Finance, Participation Rate and Labour Force Growth in Canada by Dan Ciuriak and Harvey Sims (Ottawa: Department of Finance, 1980), p.11.
- 9. Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Division, unpublished data.
- 10. Ibid.
- 11. Ibid.
- 12. Ibid.
- 13. 'Working Mothers and Child Care Arrangements', feature article in Statistics Canada, The Labour Force, Catalogue 71-001 (monthly), September 1975.
- 14. Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Division, unpublished data.
- 15. Ibid.
- 16. Ibid.
- 17. Statistics Canada, The Labour Force, Catalogue 71-001 (monthly), December 1984, Table 87.
- 18. Canada, National Health and Welfare, National Day Care Information Centre, Status of Day Care in Canada: A Review of the Major Findings of the National Day Care Study, 1984, (Ottawa: National Health and Welfare, n.d.), p.7.
- 19. Ministry of Community & Social Services, M.I.S. Client Services, Day Nursery Information System Request #A850199.
- 20. Statistics Canada, Initial Results from the 1981 Survey of Child Care Arrangements. Labour Force Research Paper #31, 1982, table 2, page 95.
- 21. Ibid.

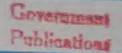


4th floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1C2  
(416) 965-7785

435 James Street S.  
Thunder Bay, Ontario  
P7E 6E3  
(807) 475-1691

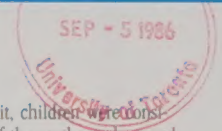


Honourable Ian Scott,  
Attorney General and  
Minister Responsible  
for Women's Issues



# Women in the Labour Force “Child Care”

No. 4 in a series of factsheets produced by  
The Ontario Women's Directorate



INTRODUCTION

In the traditional view of the family unit, children were considered to be the primary responsibility of the mother, who cared for them in the family home while the father worked in paid employment. This view is changing, however, as increasing number of two-parent families are characterized by the presence of both husband and wife in the labour force. In Ontario in 1984, of the 538,000 families with pre-school age children (defined as children under 6 years of age) 164,000, or 30.5% were couples in which the husband was employed and the wife also held a full-time job.<sup>1</sup> If wives who work part-time are also included then the number of families increases to 238,000 or 44.2%.<sup>2</sup>

The growth in the number of lone-parent families is also altering the traditional view of the family unit. Between 1951 and 1984 the number of lone-parent families in Ontario more than doubled reaching 205,000 in 1984.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, projections for Canada indicate that single-parent households will increase by 84% by the year 2000.<sup>4</sup> The majority of lone-parent families are headed by women, and 1984 data for Ontario indicate a labour force participation rate for this group of 61.6%.<sup>5</sup>

(The participation rate is defined as the percentage of the population, or, in this case, the percentage of a specific group within that population, i.e. female single-parents, who are in the labour force). In addition, a significant increase in the number of male-headed lone-parent families is also expected. It is estimated that the number of single-parent families headed by men will increase nationally to 180,000 or 1.6% of all households by the end of this century.<sup>6</sup>

Economic forecasts indicate that the participation rate of women in the labour force will continue to grow – a pattern which is seen by many economists as crucial to the future economic development of the country.<sup>7</sup> This growth includes increasing numbers of women with young children who are remaining in or re-entering the labour force. If projections for increases in the size of the female labour force over the next two decades are realized, one can assume at least a proportionate increase in the number of couples where both partners work. Such increases, in conjunction with the growth in the number of lone-parent families, are likely to bring an increase in demand for child care facilities.

The traditional view of the family, which held that women primarily are responsible for the care of their own children, contributed to the belief that child care is a 'women's issue' and, therefore, a 'women's responsibility'. In a two-parent family, however, where both husband and wife are in the work force, child care must be seen as a parental responsibility. When women worked to produce goods and services in the home, child care was one of their many functions. However, when they join the paid labour force, it can no longer be assumed that women will maintain all of their former responsibilities in addition to assuming new ones.

Another point of interest in an examination of changing family structures is the development of alternative work arrangements, which may be required to enable working parents to effectively combine the responsibilities of work and family. It is possible that in response to the needs of working mothers and fathers in our society, options such as job-sharing, flexible working hours and compressed work weeks will become a pattern for the future. Acknowledgement of the child-rearing responsibilities of both parents has also initiated discussions regarding the provision of parental leave for the care of young children. Such arrangements would allow either parent the option of a leave of absence to care for a young child or could, perhaps, provide parents with the opportunity to share this responsibility.

Whatever the solutions, it is evident that society must adapt to the changing structure of family units.

WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

The number of Ontario women working outside the home has increased dramatically in the past two decades.

TABLE ONE\*  
Women in the Ontario Labour Force  
and their Participation Rates

Number	Participation Rates	
663,000	1960	31%
1,106,000	1970	41%
1,818,000	1980	54%
1,883,000	1981	56%
1,924,000	1982	56%
1,971,000	1983	56%
2,026,000	1984	57%

\*All statistical data are from Statistics Canada, The Labour Force, Catalogue 71-001 (annual averages), unless otherwise noted.



This growth, as illustrated in Table One, is reflected in the labour force activity of all age groups. In Ontario in 1984, 74.7% of women aged 20-44 were in the labour force. These years, often referred to as the chief child-rearing years, were, at one time, associated with a temporary or even permanent retirement from the labour force. In the last 20 years, however, there has been a dramatic reversal of this pattern.

Approximately 80% of all children born in North America are born to women between the ages of 20 and 34<sup>8</sup> and the participation rate for women in Ontario in this age group has grown from 43.7% in 1966 to almost 75% in 1984 – an increase of 71.6%.

At the same time, there has been a substantial increase in the participation rate of married women in the labour force. In 1951, only 15% of married women in Ontario worked outside the home. This figure doubled to 31.6% in 1966, and by 1984, 57.4% of married women were in the labour force. Also, it is interesting to note that today, 61.5%, or three-fifths, of working women are married.<sup>9</sup>

MOTHERS IN THE LABOUR FORCE

The patterns of female labour force participation have changed over the last 20 years. It can no longer be assumed that a woman will work only until she marries or has her first child. In 1984, there were 270,000 women in the Ontario labour force with at least one child under 16. Tables Two and Three show the increase over a nine-year period in the labour force activity of women with children. The 1984 data indicate that the participation rate for women in Ontario with at least one child under six was 59.1%.<sup>10</sup> By far the greatest increase occurred among women with at least one child under three years of age; by 1984, over half the mothers with a child under three in Ontario was a wage earner.

TABLE TWO\*\*  
Participation Rates of Women in the Ontario Labour Force by Presence of Children, by Age of Youngest Child, 1975, 1980 and 1984<sup>11</sup>

Age of Youngest Child	Participation Rate		
	1975	1980	1984
Under 3	36.6%	47.9%	56.5%
3-5 years	46.2%	56.2%	63.4%
6-15 years	55.0%	64.2%	69.7%
Under 6 years	40.6%	51.3%	59.1%
Under 16	48.0%	58.2%	64.6%

TABLE THREE\*\*  
Women in the Ontario Labour Force by Presence of Children, by Age of Youngest Child, 1975, 1980 and 1984<sup>12</sup>

Age of Youngest Child	Number of Women		
	1975	1980	1984
Under 3	116,000	147,000	184,000
3-5 years	104,000	122,000	131,000
6-15 years	318,000	381,000	405,000
Total	538,000	650,000	720,000

Although the age categories are somewhat different, data from a 1973 study, when compared to the figures in Tables Two and Three, illustrate the extent to which the labour force activity of women with children has increased.

TABLE FOUR  
Women in the Ontario Labour Force by Presence of Children for Women Ages 20-54 by Age of Youngest Child, 1973<sup>13</sup>

Age of Youngest Child	Number Women in Labour Force	Participation Rate
Under 2 years	59,000	26.7%
2-5 years	107,000	35.3%
6-16 years	279,000	48.3%
No child under 16	528,000	69.8%
Total	973,000	52.4%

Information classed by marital status is also available on the labour force activity of women with children. In 1975, for example, 36.3% of married women with children under three were in the labour force. By 1984, 57 of every 100 such mothers were working outside the home.

TABLE FIVE\*\*  
Participation Rates of Married Women in the Ontario Labour Force, by Age of Youngest Child, 1975, 1980 and 1984<sup>14</sup>

Age of Youngest Child	Participation Rate		
	1975	1980	1984
Under 3 years	36.3%	47.9%	51.1%
3-5 years	45.7%	54.4%	63.1%
6-15 years	54.1%	63.0%	69.0%
Total	47.2%	57.0%	64.2%

In 1975, 57% of single, divorced or widowed women with children under 16 were in the labour force. This rate had increased to over 69% by 1980 and remained at approximately 69% until 1984.

TABLE SIX\*\*  
Participation Rates of Single, Widowed or Divorced Women in the Ontario Labour Force, by Presence of Children, 1975, 1980 and 1984<sup>15</sup>

Age of Youngest Child	Participation Rate		
	1975	1980	1984
Under 3 years	41.2%	46.7%	47.4%
3-5 years	52.9%	70.8%	66.5%
6-15 years	62.7%	73.9%	74.0%
Total	57.0%	69.4%	68.5%

\*\*Data refer to women who are heads or spouses of heads of an economic family. A family is defined as a 'group of two or more persons who are living together in the same dwelling and who are related by blood, marriage or adoption.'

CHILDREN OF MOTHERS IN THE LABOUR FORCE

The data presented thus far document the increase in the labour force participation rates of women with children. Just as important to any discussion of child care, however, is the number of children these mothers represent.

In Ontario in 1984, there were 275,000 working women with at least one child under the age of six. This means that there is a minimum of 275,000 children in this age group whose mothers are in the labour force. The comparable figure for children under three years of age was 159,000.

FULL AND PART-TIME WORK

In Ontario in 1984, there were 481,000 women employed on a part-time basis. They accounted for 26.3% of all employed women in the province, while the remaining 73.7% were employed in full-time jobs. It is often assumed that part-time work is chosen by many mothers because of their child care responsibilities. However, Table Seven shows that the majority of mothers in the labour force are working full-time.

TABLE SEVEN  
Employment of Women Responsible for a Family, by Presence of Children, Full-time and Part-time, Ontario, 1984<sup>16</sup>

	% of Women		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	
At least one child 0-5	77.8%	22.2%	100.0%
Without children less than 6, but at least one 6-15	81.3%	18.7%	100.0%

Only 11.9% of women working part-time cite personal or family responsibilities as the reason for their part-time status.<sup>17</sup>

CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

A) Programs

Child care arrangements can take the form of enrolment in day care centres or in supervised private home care; they may also consist of informal arrangements with relatives or private home care givers. Within these broad categories, there are a number of further divisions. Day care centres, for example, may be run by municipalities, charitable corporations with community boards, industries, or other work places, parent co-operatives or commercial operators.

The Day Nurseries Act is the governing legislation for child care within Ontario. "Day nurseries" is the generic term for the organized services within the jurisdiction of the Act that provide care for children outside their own homes on a daily basis. These services are of two basic types: centre-based care and supervised private-home day care.

Broadly speaking, the programs offered by licensed day nurseries in Ontario may be characterized as:

- full-time programs, operated by both group care centres and supervised private-home day care agencies, and providing what is commonly understood as "day care" for pre-school children of working parents;
- part-time day nursery programs for pre-school children, historically known as "nursery schools";
- part-time day nursery and supervised private-home day care programs for school-age children, providing "day care" outside school hours for children of working parents;
- specialized training programs, operated by day nurseries, and serving children with developmental or physical handicaps.

As of March 31, 1985, there were approximately 2,021 group centres with a licensed capacity of approximately 74,000. Approximately 6,000 children were enrolled in licensed private-home day care under the supervision of a private-home day care agency or municipal social service department.

An examination of statistics on formal child care arrangements reveals that the type of care varies considerably with the age of the child. In Canada, the vast majority of day care centre spaces are filled by children between three and six years of age. Only 15.2% of centre spaces are used by children under three. In contrast, over half of family or private home care spaces are used by children under three, and 32.6% by those between the ages of three and six years.

TABLE EIGHT  
Ages of Children Registered in Day Care Centres and Family Day Care, Canada, 1984<sup>18</sup>

Age	Centre		Family Day Care	
	No.	%	No.	%
Under 3	22,761	15.2%	11,842	54.6%
3-6	97,522	65.0%	7,076	32.6%
6 and over	29,682	19.8%	2,771	12.8%
Total	149,965	100.0%	21,689	100.0%

This distribution is similar to that found in Ontario. More than 86% of all children enrolled in centre care are between two and a half and six years of age (includes preschool to age 5 inclusive and excludes infants, toddlers, schoolage and adolescents). Infants and toddlers make up 6.1% of total enrolment.

TABLE NINE  
Age Distribution of Children Enrolled in Licensed Day Nurseries, Ontario, May, 1985<sup>19</sup>

	No.	%
Infants	1,624	1.8%
Toddlers	5,474	6.1%
Pre-school	50,514	55.7%
Age 4	17,963	19.8%
Age 5	7,941	8.8%
School-age	6,924	7.6%
Adolescents*	178	0.2%
Total	90,618	100.0%

\*Adolescents are defined as handicapped children aged ten to eighteen, usually enrolled in developmental centres.

B) Patterns

A 1981 survey conducted by Labour Force Canada provided some interesting findings regarding child care. In Ontario over half of all pre-school age children (those age 0-5) received some non-parental care each week.

Of the 723,000 pre-school age children, 406,000 (56%) had some sort of non-parental care while the balance (31,000 or 44%) were cared for exclusively by their parents in their own home. See table 10.

TABLE TEN\*\*  
Non-Parental Child Care Arrangements for Pre-School Age Children Ontario 1981<sup>20</sup>

Type of Care	#	% of Mothers Using Child Care
Nursery school or kindergarten	190,000	42%
Day care centre	41,000	10%
Cared for in own home	121,000	30%
Cared for in another home	165,000	41%

\*\*Respondent could indicate more than one type of care arrangement, so the numbers add to more than the total number of pre-school age children receiving non-parental care, and the percentages add up to more than 100%.

The same survey showed that the majority of school age children received their after school care from their mother or father (71.4%). A further 15% of the children took care of themselves after school. Other arrangements which were unspecified were used by 5% of the respondents.<sup>21</sup>

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We are now entering a new era in terms of the provision and financing of child care. Child care is no longer a welfare issue concerning only the needy. The changing face of the workforce and new family lifestyles have dramatically altered the need for child care. Child care is now a fundamental employment and economic issue concerning all working parents of all income levels.

New child care options are being developed by government, concerned groups, and individuals to meet the needs of working parents and their children. These options include increasing the number of day care centres, establishing industrial or work-related child care facilities (for example, child care at the workplace of one parent), expanding private home day care (i.e. paid care of a small number of children in a private home) and developing community-based child care, where centres could be linked to existing educational facilities.

In Ontario, the Day Care Initiative Program was established in 1980 to expand and enhance a wide range of day care programs and services, including work-related child care, and to strengthen and support informal (unsupervised) child care arrangements. In addition to providing funds to expand traditional day care services, monies were provided for a number of innovative programs including:

- Informal Care Support Projects such as caregiver registries, toy libraries, parent-child drop-in centres and caregiver workshops.
- Public Education Projects designed to enhance public awareness about what constitutes good child care and to assist parents in finding and monitoring their child care arrangements (both formal and informal care).
- Family Group Care Projects to experiment with a mode of care falling between group centre and private-home day care. In family group care, up to twelve children are cared for in a family home by two adults.
- Rural Child Care Resource Centres: Depending on local need and circumstance, these centres (which are often sponsored by an existing day care program, or by a recreation or community centre) provide a combination of child care-related programs. Although these programs are relatively new, it is felt that they will respond better to rural needs for more flexible child care arrangements and recognize the part-time and seasonal work patterns of rural families.

These programs and other innovative ideas will be needed to meet the demand for good, affordable child care.